

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
FLORENCE DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) CRIMINAL NO.: 4:17CR00161-RBH(1)
vs.)
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)
) Declaration of Dr. Charles L. Conant, III
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BENJAMIN THOMAS SAMUEL)
MCDOWELL)

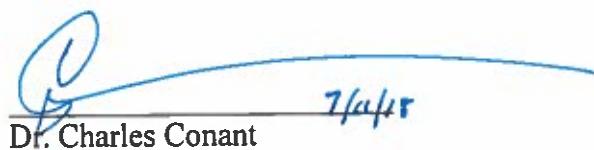
Under penalty of perjury, I, Dr. Charles L. Conant, III, would show unto the court:

- My name is Dr. Charles L. Conant, III, I have known Benjamin since he was in the third grade. At the time I met Benjamin, I was a Learning Specialist at Horry County School District. My current job is Behavioral Specialist with Horry County School District. Mr. Nettles has asked me to relate my knowledge of Benjamin to the court.
- When I met Benjamin, he was 8 or 9. He could not read. He did not know letters or the sounds associated with letters. I had recently purchased a learning to read program to assist children with reading issues. Benjamin worked with that program and learned to read over the years. His reading comprehension was never good, but over time he could understand the basics of a passage or an article.
- Benjamin was always respectful to me when I taught him at home. He was a good hearted young man.
- During his time in elementary and middle school, I had a lot of contact with Benjamin. He was in self-contained resource classes because of his low IQ. His school evaluations consistently placed his IQ in the high 50s or low 60s. He received disability payments from

the government while in school due to his intellectual impairment. Benjamin remained in special education resource classes until he received an occupational diploma after the 12th grade. This diploma allows a student to go to a technical school, only Benjamin was not qualified for that because he could not pass the necessary tests.

- Due to my good relationship with Benjamin, Benjamin would seek me out to talk to me. I saw that there was a lot of negativity in Benjamin's life, so I tried to be positive with Benjamin. I learned a lot about his personal life. I knew that Benjamin felt abandoned by his father. Joann, Benjamin's mom, had limited cognitive abilities herself. She was not equipped to handle a child with the problems Benjamin presented. In my opinion, Joann did the best she could with Benjamin, but she needed to keep him a baby. She needed to be needed by him. I do not think this aided Benjamin's emotional growth. Over time, this caused Benjamin to get frustrated with Joann, leading to conflict between the two of them.
- Benjamin could get angry and lose his temper. Benjamin struggled to keep himself in control of his emotions. When he became angry or frustrated, he would lash out at others, at his environment, and at himself. I recall that at one point, he was on home bound instruction because of his temper. Benjamin was prescribed different medications to help him control himself.
- When Benjamin was at school, he interacted with other students. But he did not have any friends with whom he played when school was dismissed. As he got older, people would take advantage of him. If Benjamin had any money, he would have people around him. Once that money was gone, he was alone again. These were only superficial "friends" taking advantage of Benjamin. Benjamin wanted to be like the other boys, but because of his intellectual disabilities and stunted emotional growth, he never fit in.

- I know that Benjamin used illegal drugs, and I know that Benjamin went to prison. He has committed another crime and there are consequences for that. In my opinion, Benjamin functions intellectually at about a third or fourth grade level. Socially and emotionally, he functions as a 9 or 10 year old would. I hope that during his incarceration Benjamin can get mental health treatment in a therapeutic environment, if that is possible.
- The foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



Dr. Charles Conant

7/14/18